



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

# THE ART AMATEUR.

to the full. Fortunate is the possessor—a Boston banker—of this intimate memorial of a delightful acquaintanceship. Another interesting exhibition has been that of a multitudinous collection of Millet's paintings, sketches, and charcoal memoranda photographed by Braun. It brought one very close to the peasant painter, his methods of work and his habits of observation and thought. Mr. A. H. Bicknell, the painter, has been holding an exhibition of etchings to which he must have been devoting the most of his time of late years. He has secured a wonderful mastery of painting effects in black and white, and this work of his must have a permanent value. Miss Ellen Robbins has on exhibition a superb collection of water-color flower pictures. But her water-colors in this genre do not impress one with the strength and power of her handling in oil painting of foliage and blossoms, nor with the daring and originality of her composition for decorative effect.

GRETA.

## The Cabinet.

### ABOUT SNUFF-BOTTLES.



O a person about to become a collector of art objects from the extreme East, we would say by all means begin with a collection of snuff-bottles. When one knows the snuff-bottle thoroughly, he may be considered furnished at all points with the knowledge necessary to an amateur, whether of porcelains, crystals, jades, agates, or other hard stones, or any of the multifarious materials of which snuff-bottles are made. This variety of material affords one of the main reasons for studying these small objects. The variety of workmanship and of design displayed in them is almost as great, and is another consideration in their favor. Their size makes it possible to have a comprehensive collection in a small space, and last, though not least, the moderate sum for which such a collection can be formed is to be taken into account.

There is not much fraud in snuff-bottles. As a rule, their prices would not warrant it. Then, they are so easily handled and examined that the most careless buyer is little likely to overlook any crack or flaw, still less, if he has any knowledge at all, a deliberate attempt at deception. Nevertheless, some of the customary misrepresentations are occasionally made by ignorant or unprincipled dealers, who may, for instance, claim that a porcelain snuff-bottle dates from the Ming dynasty, although that dynasty ceased to reign before the use of tobacco in any form was introduced in the East. The earliest date assignable is that of the Kang-he dynasty, beginning about the middle of the seventeenth century although, of course, small bottles of earlier date, manufactured for other uses, may have found their way into collections of snuff-bottles. Such small bottles will usually be found to be of a shape quite different from the flattened, lenticular shape affected in most snuff-bottles.

The oldest snuff-bottles are of hard stones, such as crystal, carnelian, agate and jade; and of these, the oldest are distinguished by the absence of wrought decoration, the selection of particularly fine specimens of the stones made use of, and the thinness to which the material is brought by hollowing out the interior with diamond dust. Chinese patience and lavishness of mechanical labor is shown especially in the shoulders of the piece being as thin as elsewhere, as is easily perceived by moving about the little ivory spoons or dippers with which many snuff-bottles are supplied. Modern imitators in Germany and France rarely take the trouble to finish their work in the Chinese manner, nor would it pay them to do so. The German agates, also, are much inferior in beauty to the Chinese, who have in the mountains of the province of Yunnan, the richest deposits of the semi-precious stones in the world.

Still less likely to be imitated to any deceptive degree are the somewhat later specimens in which the natural accidents of color have been taken advantage of by the workman to bring out in relief on the surface of the bottle pictures of animals or plants, or sometimes a little landscape. Bottles of this sort, in which beauty of material, artistic design, and finished workmanship concur, bring the highest prices, sometimes as much as \$500 for a single piece. The designs are extremely various. A bottle in Mr. R. E. Moore's collection is of semi-trans-

parent yellowish agate, which had irregular couches of black, much larger on one side than on the other. The artist ornamented it with a design of storks, some on the ground, some flying; those on the one side being wrought entirely out of the black, those on the other in the white, minute specks of black being reserved for the eyes. A design which is often repeated with variations is that of the "Hand of Buddha," a peculiar root so called because of its resemblance to a closed human hand. Mr. Moore has two specimens of this form in aventurine, both ornamented with little figures of bats—the Chinese symbol for happiness. Heart-shaped, leaf-shaped and peach-shaped bottles in agate, jade and crystal are to be met with, and they are usually beautifully carved. The jades most affected are the milky white variety, and the crystalline form marked with bright green spots known by scientists as "jadeite." Sometimes a very fine specimen of jade is allowed to remain in the natural form, retaining even a

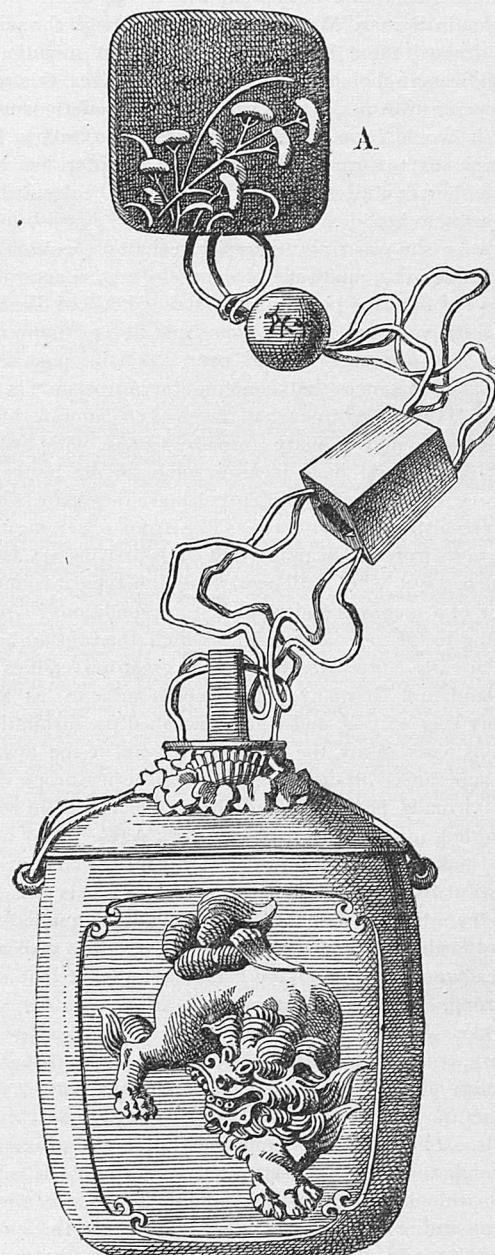
ed. Carnelian, jasper and sard are sometimes used, and amber, usually left in the rough.

Apparently, the earliest attempts to use artificially produced matters for snuff-bottles were confined to imitations of wrought agates in glass of several superposed colors. At times these imitations come nearer to the natural stone than the famous pieces of Roman glass which were long supposed to be the "murrine" vases of the ancients. But, as a rule, the workman gave a free rein to his fancy, and overlaid colorless glass with couches of ruby, black, pink, yellow and other colors, out of which he wrought the most surprising animals and vegetables: a rose-pink cat and black parrot on one side of a vase, and a blue tree with a transparent dog beneath it being a combination scarcely more fantastical than ordinary.

Porcelain bottles intended to hold snuff are generally of the Kang-he and Kien-long periods. The paste, except in the oldest pieces, is apt to be rather soft and brittle. They will not stand as rough usage as the true Ming porcelains. But what a glorious variety of ornamentation they are made to bear! Every class of glaze, crackle, under-glaze and over-glaze painting, relief and incised decoration are to be had. Some of the older white pieces are decorated with very high reliefs, mostly of Buddhistic subjects. These bottles have usually a double shell, the outer being wrought in an open-work reticulated pattern with sunken medallions bearing groups of saints in relief. A yet finer quality of paste is shown in some of the incised examples, and when modelling in relief and incision are both used, the finest quality of paste appears to have been employed. Blue and white, and the old "seven colors," purple, red, green, blue, black, brown and yellow, under-glaze, are rarely found on pieces evidently intended for snuff-bottles. The little rouleaus and gourd-shaped or vase-shaped bottles on which they occur were probably made for scent-bottles, and before the habit of taking snuff had become general. The most recent snuff-bottles with which the collector will concern himself, but among the very prettiest and most interesting, are those decorated in many colors over the glaze. The drawing is almost always of extreme delicacy, the composition striking and effective, the colors of the brightest, but combined with thorough knowledge of the laws of harmony. The subjects are commonly drawn from popular tales and legends, a favorite one being the intervention of a heavenly messenger between combatants either on foot or on horseback. The Emperor or some high dignitary is ordinarily shown looking on, and the background is of fantastic rocks, trees and clouds.

The prices of snuff-bottles vary a good deal, but quite a large and representative collection may be formed for the price of a single large piece of some fashionable solid color porcelain. Jades and agates come the highest. We have spoken of an agate snuff-bottle for which £100 had been paid at auction in London. The same bottle was afterward bought for \$100 by Mr. Heber R. Bishop, in whose collection it now is. The average price for bottles of hard stone, and for the choicest specimens of porcelain, is about \$25. Those in glass often bring as much, although they should not, for neither the artistic skill displayed in the porcelains, nor the labor necessary to carve and hollow jades and agates, is displayed in them. Good and sure enough specimens of all but the finest sorts can be obtained at bona fide auction sales for from \$3 to \$5 apiece. Carved red lacquer bottles and bottles of cloisonné enamel are unusual, and bring a little more. The stoppers are commonly of a different material from the bottles, and, as a rule, of a contrasting color. Coral, jade, green glass, crystal, and black agate are the commonest. The mountings of brass or silver are generally beautifully engraved, and are sometimes enriched with enamels or with small precious stones, rubies, emeralds and turquoises. So that the collector of snuff-bottles may, for, say, the cost of a six-inch peach-blown vase have, in a small case on his mantel-piece, specimens of every sort of porcelain and lapidary's work, of metal work, lacquer and enamel; and, with the knowledge gained in the study of these he may proceed with comparative safety to the purchase of bigger and more expensive, but hardly more beautiful, objects of Oriental art.

The illustrations given herewith show some very characteristic specimens. In the old Chinese bottle of carved sardonyx, the style of design is admirably adapted to working in any hard stone. The Chinese bottle of glass is in two layers, brown on white, the brown layer being cut into to afford the pattern. The Japanese, of porcelain, with dragon in relief in blue, is evidently an imitation



JAPANESE CARVED IVORY SNUFF-BOTTLE.

(THE PART MARKED A IS OF BRONZE.)

part of the matrix, but beautifully polished. Jades are perhaps best distinguished by their texture. That of ordinary precious jade is waxy, that of jadeite distinctly crystalline; that of soapstone, which is sometimes passed off for jade, by the ignorant, is soapy rather than waxy. Besides this, the latter stone is easily scratched, while the jade is very hard. Some calcareous formations, which appear to be confined to the Yunnan mountains, yield a substance very nearly approaching to jade in color, texture and hardness, but different in chemical composition. Specimens of this spar, for such it is, are, however, almost as highly esteemed as the true jades which they so nearly approach in their sensible qualities.

Of crystals, the only sort much sought after by American amateurs is the pure and flawless colorless kind. In China, however, certain tints of smoky and rose-colored crystals are quite as highly esteemed. Of agates, the murrine or spotted agates, the banded and the clear variety, with needle-like crystals of rutile, are most admir-

of an old Chinese piece in hard stone. The Chinese carved ivory bottle shows more delicate ornamentation than is applied to stones. The remaining bottle, also in ivory, is of Japanese make, and is comparatively modern in style. The netsuke, A, belonging to it, is in bronze.

not meant to deceive, but only to cover up "a natural defect." As for marks, the style of the writing apart, M. Jametel agrees with other good judges that they are of no value whatever. He says that it is no uncommon occurrence to find a beggar by the roadside eating his

a rectangular panel of green jade, with dragons carved "au jour" and teak stand, \$175; a large green jade bowl, with cover, \$107; six bronze panels ornamented with insects, fish, birds, etc., in colored metals, \$132; a pale green casket and cover of jade, \$95; a large blue and white porcelain jar, \$190; a pair of celadon beakers, \$82; an old Chinese basin of cloisonné enamel, \$95; a powder blue porcelain vase, twenty-eight inches high, \$100; a white jade pilgrim bottle, carved and jewelled, \$75; two bowls and a bottle in carved rose quartz, \$190; a carved rock crystal bottle, with stopper and cup and teak stand inlaid with silver, \$95; two large porcelain vases, tea-leaf green, \$190. Such an opportunity will not soon occur again as was offered by the sale to amateurs beginning to form collections of Oriental objects. The dealers Lanthier, Watson, Thompson, and Moore bought heavily. Other buyers of note were Mr. Thomas B. Clark, Consul-General Schlesinger, Mr. W. C. Ostler, Mr. William B. Dowd, Mrs. J. Milbank, and Mr. H. R. King.

\* \* \*

A COLLECTION of several hundred Japanese and Corean tea-jars, all in their original bags of old silk or damask, makes one of the most interesting features of

## Notes for Collectors.



S collectors know, the cups, bowls, and other utensils in which the offerings of rice, fruits, and other edibles are placed on the altar of Buddha, when of old date, are usually among the chefs-d'œuvres of Chinese pottery. Maurice Jametel, in "La Chine Inconnue," gives some marks whereby the finer pieces of the sort may be known. They usually bear on the outside prayers and invocations in Thibetan, the sacred language of the Buddhists. Sometimes these characters have introduced among them an assemblage of strokes taking the form of a heart, and meant to represent the mystic "tree of life." Sometimes, also, the prayers are repeated in the form of a border around the interior edge of the vessel.



CHINESE CARVED IVORY SNUFF-BOTTLE.



JAPANESE PORCELAIN SNUFF-BOTTLE. BLUE DECORATION.

This decoration is usually in blue, but occasionally red and green are added; never other colors. The cups of the Ming dynasty are distinguished by the extreme purity of the blue. Those of the Kien-long period are of a tint less pure, but the whiteness of the paste and the fineness of the design to a European more than make up for that defect. To a Chinaman this is not so. Age is more than all other qualities with him. One way in which he judges of the age of a piece is by its weight. The old makers did not economize on their material. Again, in modern pieces the characters traced on these cups and bowls are apt to be illegible, because the workmen, unable to read them, have come by degrees to representing them by marks quite unlike them. As between the two periods best known to collectors, the Ming porcelains may be distinguished (and this applies to all porcelains on which characters of any sort are drawn) by the free, cursive appearance of the writing. It has a look of being done with "chic." Under the Kang-hi and the Kien-long the writing is more regular and studied.

\* \* \*

THE Chinese dealers are adepts in certain kinds of truquage, but are by no means the equals of the Europeans, or, let us add, American fabricators of modern antiques in inventing new tricks. They can mend broken pieces so that it is extremely difficult to detect the joining. Should the neck or foot of a vase be broken off and lost, they will grind down the broken edge so smoothly and carefully that one is likely to think that the vase was originally made so. They do not restore broken pieces with silver or silver-gilt; works so restored have been patched up in America or Europe. But they will sometimes supply the place of the missing piece with plaster, and carry the decoration across it with such skill as often to deceive a confiding purchaser. Similarly, they sometimes have the boldness to fill up old pieces in cloisonné, from which the enamel has partly fallen out, with colored wax. When the trick is discovered they excuse themselves by saying that it was

meal of scraps out of a bowl bearing the most celebrated marks of the Ming or the Kien-long period.

\* \* \*

THE sale at Moore's auction rooms on November 2d and 3d, of a considerable number of jades, porcelains, and other Oriental art objects, from the stock of Herter Bros., attracted attention as much because of the good faith shown in publicly announcing that certain pieces were reserved from sale under the usual conditions, as because of the beauty of some of the specimens. As our readers are aware, we have always reproved the common practice of making such reservations without informing the public, and it is encouraging to see a house like Herter's giving its influence on the side of honesty at public sales. The firm put an upset price of \$400 each on three pieces of jade and one porcelain jar, \$500 on a white jade bowl, \$1500 on a "peachblow" vase, \$1200 on a green jade bottle, and \$1000 on a green jade spill, and let all the rest go for what they would bring. None of the reserved pieces found purchasers, although, as the market rules, they were not marked too high. Few of the pieces that were sold brought fair prices, and many went



CHINESE SARDONYX SNUFF-BOTTLE.



CHINESE GLASS SNUFF-BOTTLE.

BROWN ORNAMENT ON WHITE GROUND.

much below their cost. Still, that is what would probably happen in any case, and Messrs. Herter will hardly consider that they have paid too dearly for sustaining the reputation of their name. A flat jade pitcher with carved lizard handle, teak stand, and rings under the spout brought \$265; a large hawthorn jar, dark color, \$104.50;

the splendid display of the First Japanese Trading Company's opening. The variety in shape, size, color and markings of these little pieces, is peculiarly surprising to one who knows how difficult it is to get a European or American mechanic, potter or other, to vary by a hair's breadth from his usual standard. There are here all shades of brown and gray, mottled, streaked, sprinkled, spotted, no two alike, and the forms vary as greatly. A quantity of old inros and tobacco-boxes in lacquer, and carved and inlaid wood, is noticeable in the next place. Black lacquers—the rarest—are in greatest number and their ornamentation is generally in the severe old style—severe, that is, in comparison with later Japanese work. A tobacco-box of unusual size is made of a section of bamboo, with a wooden cover inlaid with grapes in ivory and nacre and vine leaves, in different-colored bronzes, all in high relief. A gray lacquer inro has a gourd in nacre and gold lacquer brought out in relief upon it, and has a netsuke of dark wood representing a squirming mass of monkeys, held together by tails, claws and teeth. Of other netsukes, unattached, one represents an old priest making the acquaintance of a frog which has jumped upon his foot. He is half-pleased, half-disgusted by the animal's familiarity. Another shows a bear with well-stuffed paunch, preparing to stow himself away for the winter. His eyes are not half as big as a pin's head, yet the iris is of mother-of-pearl, and the pupils of black lacquer. An interesting object is a pocket-inkstand and brush-case combined, in silver, the inkstand made from antique sword ornaments. A well-arranged case of sword-guards shows the progress of the art of hammering and inlaying metal in Japan from the earliest dates to the most modern. Ivory carvings, lacquer-boxes, old porcelains, jades and crystals are also to be seen.

\* \* \*

IN modern work, Mr. Shugio shows the latest developments of Japanese taste and invention in porcelains ornamented with different-colored glazes on a black or